

Church of Our Saviour RenewalWorks Update

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November 29, 2020

Goals for Today's Forum

Our goals for today's conversation are to:

- Revisit the RenewalWorks process
- Highlight findings of the Spiritual Life Inventory and RenewalWorks' recommendations for COS
- Contextualize Peter's homily from this morning, including the launch of the parish-wide Bible project in January
- Share the priorities for spiritual growth coming out of RenewalWorks
- Answer any questions you have about the process or next steps

Wait, what is RenewalWorks again?

RenewalWorks helps churches (and the individuals in them) refocus on spiritual growth and identify ways that God is calling them to grow.

At the end of last year, the Vestry approved COS to move forward with RenewalWorks.

Background & Approach

RenewalWorks consists of the following steps:

- Spiritual Life Inventory - The survey we took in January/February, which explores parishioners' spiritual lives.
- Workshops - A group of 14 parishioners participated in a series of guided workshops between March and June where we reviewed findings of the Spiritual Life Inventory.
- Defining Priorities - In our final workshop, we outlined priorities for COS to help us reinvigorate our commitment to spiritual growth and vitality.

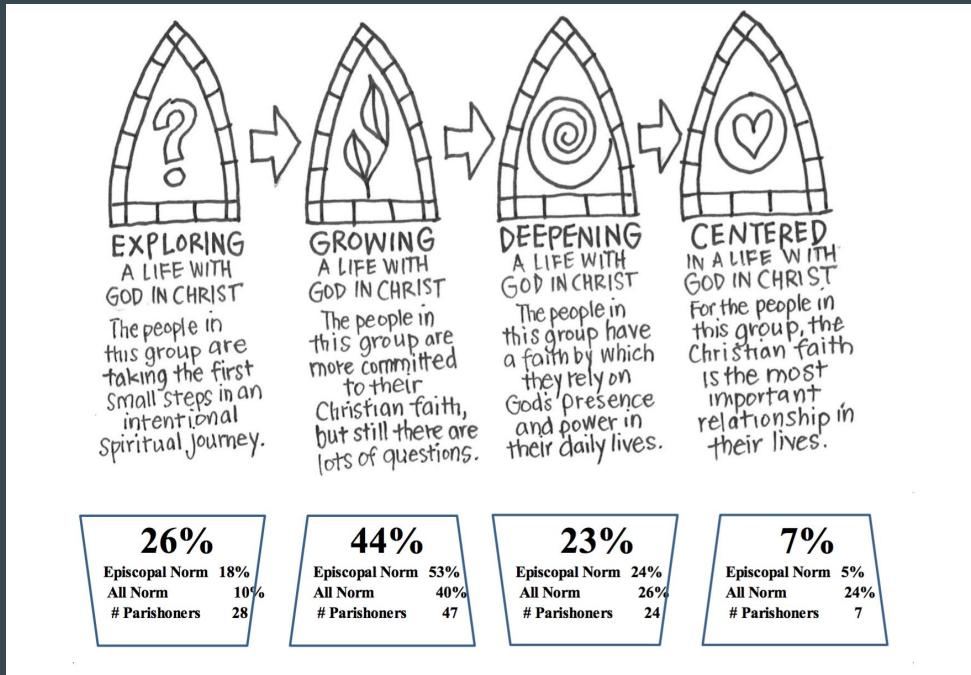
How are we defining spiritual growth?

Developing true, authentic relationships with God, one another, scripture, and the sacraments.

Spiritual Growth Continuum

This is the spiritual growth continuum, which grounds the RenewalWorks process and provides a framework for thinking about spiritual growth. The continuum represents the path of an individual's relationship with God.

The bulk of COSers who participated in the Spiritual Life Inventory identified themselves as in the Exploring and Growing phases.



Spiritual Growth Continuum

RenewalWorks provides recommendations for how parishes can support individuals in moving along the Spiritual Growth Continuum. The goal is not for everyone to reach a particular phase on the continuum, but rather to support parishioners in deepening their relationship with God.

What else did the Spiritual Life Inventory tell us?

From the Spiritual Life Inventory we learned:

- COSers have a hunger for spiritual growth that is not currently being met. We are interested in, and open to, a greater focus on spiritual growth.
- We are not complacent about our faith and church, and are seeking to go deeper, but do not feel that we have the tools to go deeper or that leadership is challenging us to grow.

What does RenewalWorks recommend?

- The investment of clergy, staff, Vestry, and each parishioner will be crucial in jumpstarting, rejuvenating, and renewing the overall health of the parish.
- We would welcome bold, church-wide initiatives.
- A greater focus on scripture in all church activities is needed.
- We should explore ways to shore up parishioners' understanding of core Episcopalian practices.
- Setting expectations for personal spiritual practices should be encouraged and taught.
- Those in leadership must be seen as role models and should provide catalysts for the parish to move forward.

Key Takeaways from RenewalWorks Workshops

Parishioners who participated in the guided workshops that followed the Spiritual Life Inventory observed:

- Our lack of familiarity and comfort with scripture, and our fear of speaking openly about our spiritual lives can be barriers to our spiritual growth.
- We are in need of a cultural shift around spiritual growth at COS so that we can more fully live into our identity as 21st century Episcopalians.

Priorities & Parish-Wide Bible Project

A key priority identified by parishioners during our workshops was to embrace the Bible as a parish and in our personal lives.

To support our engagement with scripture, in January, we will launch a parish-wide Bible project in which we will explore the Acts of the Apostles in biweekly small group meetings.

What else do I need to know about the project?

- The heart of the project will be biweekly (every other week) small group meetings that allow parishioners to read Acts together and explore the stories through historical, literary, and spiritual lenses.
- Beyond the small groups, Acts will be incorporated into the liturgy, music, and preaching, as well as guest lectures and additional opportunities for creative engagement with scripture for all ages.
- As a culminating activity, the parish will gather virtually for a day-long parish retreat in May where groups will share their reflections on the experience.

Our RenewalWorks Team

Peter Civetta

Deirdre Hastings

Kay Huff

Patt Moser

Trisha Muro

Clare Nolan

Shannon Smith Page

Betsy Peterson

Joan Roberts

Lavell Rogers

Peggy Taylor

Mark Watson

Dennis Zygadlo